Writing Effective Thank You Letters

Hanson Center for Technical Communication
Why write a thank you letter?

Scholarship donors deserve the courtesy of a thank you. This is a short, clear, but personal letter that makes them feel that their gift has made a difference.

The following slides contain tips for writing letters that do credit to you and the institution that you represent.
Three Paragraph Strategy:

1. Introduction: identifies you as recipient and expresses gratitude
2. Personal snapshot: gives donor a picture of you as a student
3. Conclusion: explains the significance of the gift
Paragraph 1: Introduction

• Begin with a statement of gratitude.
• Explain how the scholarship has helped you personally.
• Do not refer to the dollar amount of scholarship. Instead, use the official scholarship name.
Paragraph 2: Personal Snapshot

• Explain your history:
  • Hometown
  • Origins of interest in engineering
  • Why you chose Iowa

• Give the donor a specific sense of your college experience:
  • Major
  • What excites you about your field of study
  • Student organizations, internships/co-ops, or study abroad programs in which you participate or have participated
Paragraph 2: Personal Snapshot continued

• (Optional: Can make this part a new paragraph if desired.)

• Give a sense of what you have done or learned in college so far.

• State your short- and long-term plans:
  • What you hope to accomplish this year
  • Career goals
Paragraph 3: Conclusion

• Restate your thanks to the donor(s).
• Explain the significance of this gift: how this scholarship not only helps you now, but also supports your academic future and/or potential career goals.
Format of the Letter

Business format

• Date the letter

• List the recipient’s name and address

• Use a formal salutation (E.g. Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith)

• At the end, use “Sincerely” and leave a space for a signature, then type your name below
Work with the Hanson Center

It is required to have a thank you letter review conducted by the Hanson Center. All reviews will occur online. Your draft will receive detailed electronic feedback from an HCTC peer tutor.

Our tutors will help you achieve clarity, coherence, and a professional tone.

Scheduling: Sign up for reviews online and read additional instructions at https://hanson.mywconline.com/